



CORPORATE PLAN 2023–24



Further information

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia where we work, learn and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and community, and pay our respects to their cultures and Elders, past, present, and emerging.

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FOREWORD



As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS tells the story of Australia through numbers. Our high-quality data and insights are the basis for complex analysis of Australia's population, environment, and economy. This analysis informs important decisions that have an impact on everyone's daily lives.

In a fast-paced data environment, the ABS is responding to increasing demands for statistical insights by using existing public and private sector data, and by improving processes of providing data to the ABS to make them as easy as possible. The ABS is continuing to focus on data protection and security, to ensure we continue to handle and store Australia's information with the high standard expected.

The Government announced a significant four-year investment in the ABS in the 2023-24 Budget to deliver a full monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) and to provide better data on intergenerational disadvantage. This investment will also support the ABS to continue the modernisation of IT systems by transitioning key data assets and methods to a secure and scalable cloud environment.

The ABS Corporate Plan 2023-24 is our principal planning document. It provides an overview of the ABS' operating environment, key priorities and challenges, our activities and statistical outputs, and how we will measure our success.

As the Accountable Authority of the ABS, I am pleased to present the ABS Corporate Plan 2023-24, which covers the period 2023–24 to 2026–27, in accordance with the requirements of section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

I look forward to reporting to the Australian Parliament and the Australian public on our performance in delivering on this Plan in the ABS Annual Report 2023-24.

Dr David Gruen AO
Australian Statistician

ABOUT THE ABS

Our Purpose

To inform Australia's important decisions by delivering relevant, trusted, and objective data, statistics, and insights.

Our Role

The ABS is Australia's national statistical agency. It provides trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population, and environmental matters of importance to Australia.

The ABS has a leadership role in enhancing the use of public data for statistical purposes and improving the Australian Government's data and statistical capabilities. It works in partnership with other organisations to expand and improve the quality of statistical data and information available to governments and the community. The ABS advises official bodies on producing and using data and statistics, formulates standards, works with states and territories, and liaises internationally with other national statistical organisations.

The ABS also leads the Australian Public Service (APS) Data Professional Stream to build the data capabilities of the APS workforce.

Our Legislation

The primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS are set out in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

- The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority and legislates its main function as the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and provider of services for state and territory governments.
- The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental, and social topics, and has strong provisions to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.
- The *Census and Statistics (Information Release and Access) Determination 2018* enables the Statistician to release information collected under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* when specific conditions are met.

The ABS must comply with the governance and accountability system defined by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The ABS must also comply with a range of legislation including the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*, the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022*, and the *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022*.

OPERATING CONTEXT

Environment

The Australian Government released its initial Data and Digital Government Strategy in May 2023, outlining a vision for how data and digital services will underpin a world-leading APS to 2030. It describes data as one of the most valuable assets that the Australian Government holds and calls for the use of data to increase evidence-based policy and decision making.

The increasing appreciation of the value of data is generating significant additional demand for the services of the ABS. While this demand is often supported by additional investment, the ABS needs to prioritise its efforts as the growth in opportunities exceeds the capacity of the ABS.

In addition to collecting and delivering new statistical insights and data assets, the ABS is also supporting the APS in increasing access to existing data. The ABS secure DataLab provides significant value for academic, government and community research using unit record data. The DataLab platform has more recently been made available for other agencies to securely share their own data.

The *Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022* (DAT Act) has set up a new scheme for sharing Australian Government data – the DATA Scheme. The DATA Scheme is underpinned by strong safeguards and consistent, efficient processes. The ABS will be able to use the DATA Scheme where current access arrangements under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* do not meet user requirements, and where it is consistent with community expectations.

While the demand for new statistics, data and insights continues to grow, directly collecting data is becoming more challenging and costly. Like our international counterparts, the ABS is experiencing a decline in survey response rates from businesses and households. While ABS response rates remain higher than those in most comparator countries, the ABS needs to transform its approach to make surveys easier to complete and shift to lower cost digital collections. The ABS also needs to continue to increase its reliance on existing public and private sector data sets.

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) reported that 45% of data breaches in the first half of 2022-23 resulted from cyber-security incidents¹. In response to the persistent threat of cyber-security attack, the ABS is improving its capability to protect the increasing volume of data it holds. The OAIC also reported a 26% increase in Notifiable Data Breaches. The ABS is uplifting systems, improving data handling discipline, and adopting cloud services to reduce the likelihood of a successful attack and unintended release of sensitive information. This uplift will require significant investment over time, as the ABS continues its move off ageing systems and infrastructure.

1 [Notifiable Data Breaches Report: July to December 2022](#) | The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (www.oaic.gov.au)

Collaboration and cooperation

There is increasing opportunity for data assets that bring together data from across the APS and from state and territory governments. There are also increasing opportunities to use data collected and held in the private sector to support high-quality official statistics. To support this, the ABS collaborates closely with federal, state, and territory governments and engages with the private sector.

Our cooperation across government, research institutions, and the community includes:

- partnering with the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to deliver the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) and Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure (ANDII)
- partnering with the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO and Geoscience Australia on the Australian Climate Service (ACS) to help the government and community better understand the threats posed by natural disasters and reduce their impacts. The ACS connects the Commonwealth's extensive climate and natural hazard information to provide a single source of truth.

The ABS is an active member of the United Nations Statistical Commission and has many enduring international relationships. Through these connections, the ABS exchanges its expertise, collaborates on research and development, and enhances the quality and relevance of its own statistical products and services. ABS international engagements include:

- engaging with the International Monetary Fund to develop the seventh edition of the *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM7)*
- collaborating with the United Nations Statistical Commission to update the *System of National Accounts 2008* (2008 SNA), which will culminate in 2025 SNA
- collaborating with other developed nations in the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) to develop strategies and solutions in a flexible and agile way
- partnering with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support regional statistical capability development and institutional strengthening through programs in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and elsewhere in the Pacific.

The ABS is committed to ongoing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure all surveys are undertaken in a culturally safe manner and reflect the priorities, values, and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Capability

The ABS has a capable, diverse, resilient, and highly engaged workforce. Our people rise to challenges, show high standards of professionalism, leadership, and technical expertise, and maintain the ABS' reputation for statistical excellence. We empower our workforce to identify areas for improvement, develop innovative solutions, and escalate concerns for resolution as necessary.

ABS staff are in high demand, with their skills making them attractive in both the public and private sector. The ABS is also approached regularly for staff availability for secondment or specialist assistance. This is consistent with the findings of the National Skills Commission that has reported high demand for data and digital capability². The ABS continues to focus on its employee value proposition (EVP) to attract and retain staff. The ABS value proposition for staff continues to be based on flexible approaches to working, provision of development opportunities, and a strong and highly regarded graduate recruitment and development program. More recently, the EVP has been enhanced through a deliberate strategy to enable work to be conducted across ABS locations, and improving the experience for staff joining the ABS.

To achieve the purpose of providing trusted data, statistics and insights to inform Australia's important decisions, the ABS has established strategic priorities to guide operational decision-making and inform investment choices. The ABS is committed to a series of shifts to deliver on our strategic priorities while also responding positively to immediate pressures and opportunities.

These shifts - Data; Clients; Workforce; Technology; and Leadership - shape how we source and protect data; how and when we engage with clients; how we invest in people to build capability; how we modernise our technologies; and how the ABS leadership team works together to support staff, clients and partners.

Data	Clients	Workforce	Technology	Leadership
				
Shift towards Solutions focused; data acquired from various sources; maximum reuse of data	Shift towards Proactive, client-centric; partnering to design enhanced solutions	Shift towards Solution brokers; collaborative by default; working in multi-disciplinary teams	Shift towards Contemporary, flexible solutions; provisioning services for external users	Shift towards Collaborative, integrated leadership team; outwardly focused and internally supportive

In 2023-24, the ABS is moving to a new organisational design to shift how we work and deliver on our ambitious work program. Our new organisational design will ensure the staff, processes and systems of the ABS are organised in the best way possible to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. The organisation design process was informed by ABS staff through an open consultation process. An associated structural change will support the ABS in achieving the benefits of the new organisational design and help deliver the ABS' work program.

2 [Digital skills in Australia and internationally | National Skills Commission \(www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au)

Risk oversight and management

The ABS recognises risk as a necessary part of the innovation required to deliver relevant, timely and high-quality statistics. Where strategies and priorities result in higher risk, the ABS relies on internal management and engagement with clients to ensure there is appropriate awareness and control of the risk.

The ABS Risk Management Framework (the Framework) sets out the Australian Statistician's expectations for how the ABS manages its risks to deliver better outcomes for the Australian community. Based on the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, the Framework supports the ABS in establishing and maintaining appropriate systems and internal controls for the oversight and management of risk, in line with Australian Government requirements.³

The ABS' Executive Board, chaired by the Australian Statistician, has overarching responsibility for the Framework. The Executive Board monitors the strategic risks facing the ABS and determines our risk appetite and tolerance. The Chief Risk Officer supports the Executive Board in reviewing enterprise risk and assuring the effectiveness of our management of risk. The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice to the Australian Statistician on the appropriateness of the enterprise risk management framework and internal controls.

The ABS builds clear lines of sight for all staff to the enterprise-level strategy and priorities. Managers at all levels are accountable for managing risks to their objectives by establishing monitoring and control activities proportionate to the level of risk. ABS governance bodies enable collective and coordinated responses to risk by enabling investment in controls for common or systemic risks, supporting effective escalation of higher-level risks, and overseeing the efforts of line managers in addressing lower-level risks.

The ABS risk culture supports smart risk-taking - finding opportunities and applying informed risk management practices to undertake innovative projects. The ABS applies caution when core business deliverables are involved and accepts sensible risk-taking leads to improvement.

Strategic uncertainties

The ABS continues to face external and internal uncertainties which may affect our ability to achieve our priorities including:

- increasing difficulty sourcing data from households and businesses
- attracting and retaining staff with the necessary data capability particularly with the growing competition for statisticians and data scientists
- persistent threat of sophisticated cyber-security attack
- privacy concerns caused by large-scale private sector data breaches, and their impacts on trust in government institutions, negatively influencing the provision of data from providers
- reliance on ageing IT systems and processes unable to support emerging statistical methods
- meeting the increasing demand from clients for our data and statistics – this demand is growing as more researchers and analysts across government, academia and public policy institutes seek data and statistics for policy development and evaluation.

³ [Commonwealth Risk Management Policy | Department of Finance \(www.finance.gov.au\)](#)

ACTIVITIES

The Australian Statistician, assisted by the Executive Board, articulates the ABS strategic priorities to ensure activities planned and executed are coherent, complementary, and coordinated.

The ABS has five enterprise-level strategic priorities:

- Priority 1: Produce high-quality statistics
- Priority 2: Generate timely new insights
- Priority 3: Exercise leadership in the data landscape
- Priority 4: Reduce burden on data providers
- Priority 5: Enhance organisational capability, resilience, and adaptability.

The ABS sets these strategic priorities in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders, and in response to the external operating environment. They inform our employees and stakeholders of the highest priority areas of endeavour for the ABS.

Priority 1: Produce high-quality statistics

The ABS collects and analyses a broad range of social, economic, business, population and environmental data and produces valuable statistics and insights to inform Australia's important decisions.

ABS data and statistics underpin fiscal and monetary policy and inform the delivery of programs and services vital to the health and wellbeing of Australians. They also support a strong well-functioning democracy and provide reliable information on a range of matters critical to public debate.

Economic and Environment

During 2023–24, the ABS will continue to deliver a range of economic, industry, environmental and agricultural statistics, and products to meet the needs of government, businesses and the community.

Key activities contributing to Priority 1 include:

- producing high-quality, respected, well explained **macroeconomic statistics**, including the Australian System of National Accounts
- making greater use of big data to enhance the measurement of **Household Final Consumption Expenditure**
- producing quality **price indexes**, including a monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) Indicator
- enhancing the **Monthly Household Spending Indicator** and **Monthly Business Turnover Indicator** to better meet client needs
- producing new **environmental-economic accounts** to measure the extent, condition and services provided by Australia's terrestrial and ocean ecosystems in partnership with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Case study: Modernisation of agricultural statistics

The ABS will no longer undertake large agricultural surveys, including the annual Rural Environment and Agricultural Commodities Survey and the five-yearly Agricultural Census.

In 2022-23, the ABS shifted to primarily using existing data from government, industry, and commercial sources to produce official agricultural statistics. The ABS will run a small number of short surveys of agricultural businesses to complement these existing data sources.

This new approach reduces the burden on farmers and agricultural businesses from being required to fill in surveys by around 97% and continues to produce timely, high-quality agriculture statistics.

People and Place

During 2023–24, the ABS will continue to deliver a range of population, labour and social statistics such as quarterly population estimates and the monthly labour force series to meet the needs of government, businesses and the community.

Key activities contributing to Priority 1 include:

- providing accurate and timely **population estimates** and components of growth to support planning and service delivery
- publishing results from the **Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study (IHMHS)**. The IHMHS is the largest health study undertaken in Australian history, providing the most complete picture of people's physical and mental health. The ABS will be releasing results on mental health and other key health statistics including long-term health conditions and health risk factors.
- continuing to support the implementation and refinement of a needs-based school funding model (Capacity to Contribute) and to support the delivery of student training outcome statistics from the **Vocational Education and Training National Data Asset**
- improving ABS **industrial relations and regional labour market data**
- conducting an optimised **Survey of Income and Housing** in combination with increased use of administrative data such as superannuation and government payments to reduce the time it takes people to complete the survey
- commencing release of data on **barriers and incentives to labour force participation** yearly (rather than every two years) and releasing some key measures quarterly
- supplying geospatially enabled social and economic data via the **Australian Climate Service** to enable governments to prepare for, respond to, and recover from extreme weather events and climate challenges.

2026 Census of Population and Housing

As required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the ABS will conduct the next Census in 2026. The Census provides a snapshot of the economic, social and cultural make-up of our nation, and tells the story of how Australia is changing over time. The design and development of the 2026 Census continues in 2023-24.

Key activities include:

- continuing the review of and consultation on **Census content**
- conducting the first and second phases of the **2026 Census Privacy Impact Assessment** to support the ABS in our 'privacy by design' approach to the 2026 Census. The ABS considers privacy from the development of Census topics and questions through to the use of existing data sources to enhance Census data quality.
- **establishing partnerships** with commercial, government and non-government organisations to assist with the preparation and delivery of the Census, including procurement of a commercial partner to support the Census Digital Service.

Performance Measure: Complete public consultation on 2026 Census topics

Every Census, the ABS undertakes a review to inform our recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census, to ensure information collected in the Census remains relevant.

The review of topics includes two phases of public consultation, as well as stakeholder engagement and testing. In late 2023, the ABS will publish outcomes from the final phase of consultation, including the topic changes that will be tested.

The ABS will make its recommendation to the Government in mid-2024.

Statistical Standards and Infrastructure

The production of high-quality statistics relies on contemporary, high-quality statistical standards and infrastructure. The following investments are planned for 2023-24:

- continuing the comprehensive review of the **Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations** (ANZSCO). ANZSCO is used in the collection, publication and analysis of occupation statistics, and used across the APS in a variety of ways. The review will be completed by December 2024 for use in the 2026 Census.
- developing a **coding capability** using machine learning technology to code text to statistical classifications. This capability will be deployed as a whole of government facility for occupation coding and support ABS internal use across a number of classifications.
- releasing a major review of the **Religious Affiliation Standard** in December 2023. The Religious Affiliation Standard is used for collecting, processing and presenting quality statistics about the religious beliefs and practices to which people adhere or the religious groups to which they belong.

Priority 2: Generate timely new insights

The ABS uses a range of survey and administrative data to create insights into aspects of our nation. The ABS continues to build relationships with all levels of Australian government, academia, business, and the not-for-profit sector to generate statistical information to inform and to assess the effectiveness of economic, social, and environmental policies. The ABS consults key clients and users of ABS data and statistics to ensure innovative statistical products are relevant and valued.

There is a growing number of integrated data assets in use across the public sector to support research, policy development and analysis. The ABS hosts the **Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment** (BLADE) - a large business-centred integrated data asset, and the **Person Level Integrated Data Asset** (PLIDA), otherwise known as the **Multi-Agency Data Integration Project** (MADIP) - a large person-centred integrated data asset. The ABS has developed and enhanced these data assets over the last eight years in partnerships with Commonwealth agencies and departments.

Key activities contributing to Priority 2 include:

- delivering phase two of the **Big Data, Timely Insights** (BDTI) program over the next two years. BDTI will enable the ABS to produce a full monthly CPI and continue to modernise and replace ageing IT systems.
- linking new administrative data assets to MADIP through the **Life Course Data Initiative** to improve data coverage at the community level. This will focus on the early years of people's lives to support policies and programs aimed at addressing entrenched disadvantage.
- continuing the new **Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator** to give more timely and granular information than is currently available from the existing suite of ABS employee and earnings statistics. It provides measures of wages and salaries paid over the month and changes over time and paves the way for future changes to surveys.
- adding a new quarterly updated Business Locations dataset to BLADE enabling detailed **geospatial economic analysis**. Along with quarterly updates to Business Activity Statement data, this allows the ABS to provide the National Emergency Management Agency with detailed geographic business counts and economic information for areas across Australia impacted by flood or bushfire.
- contributing data and expertise as part of a cross-Government collaboration on **supply chain resilience**. This will help in developing targeted and proportionate responses to disruption risk in supply chains providing priority commodities.

Case Study: NDDA/ANDII.

The National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) will enable researchers to better understand the life experiences of people living with disability, and will improve inclusion and opportunity for them.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services is leading the project and the Disability Reform Ministers Council is overseeing the project. The ABS is partnering with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to design, develop and deliver a new national data integration infrastructure, known as the Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure (ANDII). The NDDA will be the first integrated data asset to be hosted on ANDII.

The NDDA is being designed in collaboration and consultation with the disability community, Commonwealth agencies, and state and territory governments.

Priority 3: Exercise leadership in the data landscape

“Data is more important than ever, and maintaining the public’s trust is a critical enabler in ensuring that quality information is available for informed decision making and service delivery.

We have an opportunity to work together to support innovative ways to collect, share and use data responsibly to meet the needs of the day.”⁴

Dr David Gruen AO

The Australian Statistician continues to serve as a member of the National Data Advisory Council (the Council), set up under the DAT Act. The Council provides advice to the National Data Commissioner on matters including ethical use of public sector data; balancing data availability with privacy protection; technical best practice; and industry and international developments.

Other ABS engagement across the APS includes:

- out-posting a team to support the Office of the National Data Commissioner in its stewardship of data sharing legislation
- out-posting staff to other Commonwealth entities to support the delivery of the Data and Digital Government Strategy
- contributing as a member of the Deputy Secretaries Data Group and Secretaries’ Data and Digital Committee to provide oversight of data initiatives
- driving the Data Champions Forum and supporting the Office of the National Data Commissioner to implement new data sharing legislation.

APS Data Profession

The Australian Statistician’s role as Head of the APS Data Profession has been extended until July 2024. Dr Gruen continues to work closely with the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) and Heads of the APS Digital and Human Resources Professions to champion APS uplift in data capabilities.

The APS Data Profession’s Members’ Community Platform (MCP) connects data professionals across the Australian and State and Territory public services and promotes communities of practice. The MCP aims to raise the data capability of the public sector workforce for better national outcomes. The MCP had over 5,300 members across Australia as at 30 June 2023.

Key activities contributing to Priority 3 include:

- continuing to lead the APS-wide graduate recruitment for the Data Profession, partnering with the APSC and over 40 Australian Government agencies as OneAPS, to attract, recruit, and retain the next generation of data professionals from diverse and varied disciplines
- continuing to support and grow the data professional community through the MCP, including curating specialist learning offerings
- developing and delivering training modules targeting the Senior Executive Service and executive level cohorts, covering data governance, management and leadership
- reviewing the APS Data Capability Framework and developing an assessment tool to identify data proficiency as well as areas of capability that require further development and uplifting.

⁴ APS Data Profession | Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au)

Improved access to ABS statistics

As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS is custodian of an extensive holding of data and statistical assets which are of national significance. Users of ABS data and statistics include government agencies, local councils, public and not-for-profit organisations, researchers, businesses, and community groups. We are committed to improving access to our products and services, while ensuring privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

Key activities include:

- setting up a contemporary, secure, cost-effective solution for government partners to safely share and analyse their own data. The **Secure Environment for Analysing Data (SEAD) service** provides partner agencies with a 'pod' to serve as their own version of the cloud-based ABS DataLab infrastructure to manage risks while supporting data sharing activities.⁵
- actively engaging with the Australian public through **social media** to increase awareness of ABS data and statistics. We will release a range of snapshots and infographics on our social media platforms to promote future releases and highlight topical statistics.
- providing users of ABS statistics with access to data freely on the **ABS website** or by configuring their systems to an **Application Programming Interface (API)**. Machine-to-machine access is a fast avenue for regular users to directly ingest data into their systems. Users can also access statistics through a range of self-serve portals and platforms including the **ABS DataLab**, **TableBuilder** and **customised data requests**.

Case Study: Digital Atlas of Australia

The ABS is delivering priority social, economic and environmental data as geospatially enabled web services for inclusion in the Digital Atlas of Australia. Led by Geoscience Australia, the **Digital Atlas of Australia** will bring together, curate and connect trusted national datasets from across government into an interactive, secure, and easy-to-use online platform. It will enable anyone, anywhere to explore, analyse and visualise location-based data on geography, people, economy, and the environment.

⁵ The SEAD service is separate to the ABS DataLab but uses the same rigorous set of controls using the Five Safes Framework, aligned with the Commonwealth Data Sharing Principles. Partners have exclusive control of the pod's secure, self-contained environment. This allows each pod to function independently, while enabling safe data sharing under arrangements such as the DAT Act.

Priority 4: Reduce burden on data providers

The ABS is committed to reducing the burden on our data providers. We are constantly reviewing our data collection methods to ensure we collect information efficiently. In line with the Government's Data and Digital Strategy, the ABS strives to collect information in the most efficient and timely way, with the smallest cost on businesses.⁶

The ABS is increasing its use of administrative data, including data collected by governments and businesses, to reduce the need to conduct surveys.

Key activities contributing to Priority 4 include:

- building a secure reporting web application through the **Accounting Software Project** that uses public APIs to pull data from accounting software systems. The web application will provide small and medium businesses with an alternative way to report data instead of the burden and time of completing survey forms. The web application will be initially offered to eligible businesses in the Quarterly Business Indicators Survey (QBIS), and then expanded to the annual Economic Activity Survey.
- modernising the ABS' data sourcing capabilities and accelerating our use of digital technologies through the **Data Acquisition 2026 Strategy**. This work focuses on a digital first approach to encourage and support online participation and improve usability, accessibility, flexibility and security.
- replacing the Survey of Employment and Earnings - Public Sector with an indicator based on administrative data. The new indicator: **Public Sector Employment and Earnings** will use Single Touch Payroll-based data for the 2022-23 reference period and will replace the estimates from the survey.

Case Study: Quarterly Business Indicators Survey

The ABS is introducing a new estimation approach – composite regression estimation – for the QBIS, which will enable a 20% reduction in sample size (and hence business provider burden) while maintaining the quality of the statistical output from the survey.

6 [Data and Digital Government Strategy](#) | Department of Finance (www.finance.com.au)

Priority 5: Enhance organisational capability, resilience, and adaptability

As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS relies on the knowledge, skills and experience of our workforce to source, use and protect data, and deliver the relevant, trusted, and objective statistics and insights needed to inform Australia's important decisions.

Our focus is to remain a highly professional, statistically expert, and data-capable workforce; a workforce that continues to adapt to meet the changing information needs of governments, businesses and the community, and harnesses technological advances to make sensible use of the increasingly complex data around us.

Key activities contributing to Priority 5 include:

- standing up a series of **statistical practices**, as a result of the new organisational design, to uplift the ABS' capability in statistical infrastructure, data sourcing, statistical production, and digital products, channels and services
- maintaining clear **internal policies for effective and accountable decision-making** to align with its purpose and priorities. This includes conducting formal annual workforce risk assessments and reviews of controls against legal obligations outlined in relevant legislation.
- **attracting, developing and retaining the workforce** talent needed to meet the expectations of our clients and partners, now and into the future. Our workplace culture fosters inclusiveness, builds respect and capitalises on diversity. The ABS continues to provide targeted capability development offerings, linking to career pathway opportunities for our staff. The ABS offers flexible working arrangements and a progressive location strategy to support workforce attraction and retention.
- creating and maintaining a **psychologically safe work environment** and identifying and controlling all psychosocial hazards. The ABS will continue to provide practical guidance and education to its staff and managers to identify and manage hazards and risks to workers' psychological health and safety.
- embedding a **contemporary IT infrastructure** and mature its capability in cloud technologies. The new cloud-based capabilities will enable a more resilient environment and improve the ability to blend survey and administrative data. The use of cloud technologies provides a more flexible and scalable environment for producing statistics and statistical insights.
- committing to the Government's **APS Net Zero 2030 policy**, to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2030 and transparently reporting on its emissions from the latter half of 2023. The ABS, along with other APS agencies, will continue to build capability over time to set a standard of best practice for net zero government operations.
- continuing to strengthen the **ABS' integrity culture** including the ABS' zero tolerance for misuse of market sensitive information.

FORWARD WORK PROGRAM

The Forward Work Program (FWP) provides the schedule of statistical releases over the next four years. This program does not include experimental estimates and research papers. This program is developed through extensive consultation with government, key stakeholders including users of statistics, other government organisations and a range of non-government organisations such as community groups and industry bodies.

The ABS reviews and makes changes to the FWP to ensure it continues to appropriately measure the Australian economy, environment, and society.

Statistical releases are classified into three tiers to assist with prioritising resources. This tiering was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Tier 1	Statistics representing the foundation work of a national statistical organisation.
Tier 2	Important areas of statistics where there is a significant government outlay or where there is a significant public policy interest.
Tier 3	Other important statistical work currently undertaken to meet identified user requirements.

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Labour Market						
Average Weekly Earnings, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Six-monthly
Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Characteristics of Employment, Australia - Employee earnings - Working arrangements - Trade union membership	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia	T1	✓		✓		Two-yearly
Industrial Disputes, Australia	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Job Vacancies, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Jobs in Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Labour Account, Australia - Multiple jobholders - Labour hire workers	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Labour Force Status of Families	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Labour Force, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly and Quarterly
Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Six-monthly
Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia - Job mobility - Potential workers - Underemployed workers	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Personal Income in Australia	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Public Sector Employment and Earnings, Australia	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Retirement and Retirement Intentions, Australia	T2		✓		✓	Two-yearly
Weekly Payroll Jobs ⁷	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
Work-Related Injuries	T3			✓		Four-yearly

⁷ The Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages release has become the Weekly Payroll Jobs release to reflect the removal of wages indexes. Earning statistics are now available in the new Monthly Employee Earnings Indicator.

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Economic ^{8 9}						
Australian Industry	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Assets and Liabilities of Australian Securitised	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Australian System of National Accounts	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Balance of Payments and International Investment Position	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Building Activity and Engineering Construction	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Building Approvals	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
Business Characteristics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Construction Work Done, Preliminary	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly and Quarterly
Estimates of Industry Level KLEMS Multifactor Productivity	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Estimates of Industry Multifactor Productivity	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Finance and Wealth	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Government Finance Statistics	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Government Finance Statistics, Annual	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Government Finance Statistics, Education ¹⁰	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Input-Output Tables	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
International Investment Position, Australia: Supplementary Statistics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
International Trade in Goods ¹¹	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly

8 The Characteristics of Australian Exporters release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 has been discontinued. The release may be reinstated if user funding becomes available.

9 The Australian National Accounts: Distribution of Household Income, Consumption and Wealth release has been delayed until the Living Costs in Australia Survey results are available.

10 The Government Finance Statistics, Education release will be combined with the Government Finance Statistics, Annual release.

11 The International Trade in Goods and Services release has become International Trade in Goods as the release will not contain estimates for monthly trade in services.

Continued

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
International Trade: Supplementary Information, Calendar Year	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
International Trade: Supplementary Information, Financial Year	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Lending Indicators	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
Managed Funds	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Mineral and Petroleum Exploration	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Modellers' Database	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Monthly Business Turnover Indicator	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
Monthly Household Spending Indicator	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
National Income, Expenditure and Product	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Quarterly Business Indicators	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Research and Development Expenditure, Business	T2	✓		✓		Two-yearly
Research and Development Expenditure, Higher Education	T2	✓		✓		Two-yearly
Research and Development, Expenditure, Government and Private Non-Profit Organisations	T2	✓		✓		Two-yearly
Retail Trade Survey	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
State Accounts	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Supply Use Tables	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Taxation Revenue, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Price Indicators						
Consumer Price Index	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Consumer Price Index Indicator	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
International Trade Price Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Producer Price Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Selected Living Cost Indexes	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Total Value of Dwellings	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Wage Price Index	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Demographic						
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Life Expectancy	T2	✓				Five-yearly
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population Estimates and Projections	T2	✓				Five-yearly
Australian Historical Population Statistics	T3		✓			Five-yearly
Births and Deaths	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly and Quarterly
Causes of Death	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Household and Family Projections	T3	✓				Five-yearly
Life Expectancy	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Marriages and Divorces ¹²	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Overseas Arrivals and Departures	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Monthly
Overseas Migration	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly and Quarterly
Population by Country of Birth	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Population Projections, Australia	T2	✓				Five-yearly
Provisional Mortality Statistics	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Two-monthly
Quarterly Estimated Resident Population by State/Territory (including components of growth)	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quarterly
Regional Population Statistics	T1	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly

12 From 2023-24, the Marriages and Divorces release will have reduced content to meet international reporting obligations.

Continued

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Environmental and Sectorial ¹³						
Agricultural Commodities	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Australian Defence Industry Account	T3	✓				Irregular
Energy Account, Australia ¹⁴	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
National Land Account	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
National Ecosystem Account ¹⁵	T3		✓	✓	✓	Irregular
Tourism Satellite Account	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Australian Transport Economic Account	T3	✓				Irregular
Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Water Account, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Social ^{16 17 18}						
Cultural and creative activities ¹⁹	T3				✓	Four-yearly
Crime • Prisoners • Criminal courts • Crime victimisation • Recorded crime	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Disability, Ageing and Carers	T2	✓			✓	Irregular
Education and Work, Australia	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Gender Indicators	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
How Australians Use Their Time ²⁰	T1			✓	✓	Irregular
Migrant Settlement Outcomes ²¹	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly

¹³ The Agricultural Census release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 has been discontinued. More information is provided in the Information Paper: [Modernising ABS agricultural statistics](#) which can be accessed on the ABS website.

¹⁴ The Energy Use and Electricity Generation statistical release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 is now included in the Energy Account, Australia publication.

¹⁵ The survey will be released on a yearly basis from 2024-25.

¹⁶ The General Social Survey release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 has been discontinued to resource the growth in new ABS services.

¹⁷ The Australian Census Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 for release in 2023-24 was released ahead of schedule (April 2023). As it is a five-yearly release it does not appear in this Forward Work Program.

¹⁸ The Living Costs in Australia Survey release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 will now be released after the period of this Plan.

¹⁹ The Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events, Australia release listed in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 is now combined in the Cultural and creative activities release.

²⁰ The survey will be released on a yearly basis from 2025-26.

²¹ This release was listed as the Indicators of Migrant Outcomes release in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23.

Release	Tier	Year of Release				Release Frequency
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study	T1					Irregular
• National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing	T1	✓				Irregular
• National Health Survey 2022	T1	✓				Irregular
• National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey	T1		✓			Irregular
• National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey	T1		✓			Irregular
• National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey	T1		✓			Irregular
• National Health Measures Study	T1		✓			Irregular
National Health Survey	T2			✓		Three-yearly
Patient Experience	T3	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yearly
Personal Safety	T3			✓		Four-yearly
Qualifications and Work, Australia	T3	✓				Four-yearly
Sun Protection Measures	T3		✓			Irregular
Survey of Income and Housing	T1			✓		Irregular
Work-Related Training and Adult Learning Survey, Australia	T3			✓		Four-yearly
Census						
Australian Longitudinal Census Dataset	T2	✓				Five-yearly
Population and Housing	T1				✓	Five-yearly
Post Enumeration Survey ²²	T1				✓	Five-yearly
Other²³						
Data by Region	T2	✓	✓	✓	✓	Six-monthly

²² The Post Enumeration Survey is known to respondents as the Post Census Review; it is next due for release in 2026-27.

²³ The Australian Statistician's Analytical Series and the Australian Statistician's Technical Series are released irregularly and can be accessed on the [ABS website](#).

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

The Corporate Plan is our principal planning document and sets out how we manage our responsibilities and use of public resources. The ABS, as with all other non-Corporate Commonwealth entities, is required to use performance measures – both qualitative and quantitative – to assess the extent to which we have delivered against our purpose.

For 2023-24 and the forward estimates period referenced in this Corporate Plan:

- The performance measures meet the requirements of section 16EA of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*.
- Performance measures have been implemented for Priorities One to Four only. Measures for Priority Five are inherently input-focused and are therefore monitored internally by the business.
- Targets for performance measures are reviewed annually and have been provided for each performance measure where it is reasonable to do so.

The assessments and results of our performance and achievements will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement which is incorporated in the ABS Annual Report 2023-24.

Priority 1: Produce high-quality statistics

1.1 Trust in ABS statistics - level of trust in the ABS and its statistics

Method	Targets	Years measured
Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey (CTASS)	At least 85% level of trust in the ABS and ABS statistics	2024–25
Number of statistics released free of significant errors ²⁴	100% of statistics are released free of significant errors	2023–24 to 2026–27

1.2 International compliance - ABS statistics meet the standards for National and International Accounts, Labour Force, Unemployment, Consumer Price Index, and Estimated Resident Population

Method	Target	Years measured
Compliance with International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) ²⁵	IMF assess ABS to be 100% compliant with SDDS for in-scope collections	2023–24 to 2026–27

²⁴ An error is significant if it could mislead a user as to the value of a statistical indicator of national or state importance.

²⁵ [International Monetary Fund | Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board | SDDS Home Page \(https://dsbb.imf.org/sdds\)](https://dsbb.imf.org/sdds)

1.3 **Conduct the Census**²⁶ - implementation of the Census to deliver trusted data

Method	Targets	Years measured
Complete public consultation on 2026 Census topics	Publish 2026 Census Topic Directions	2023–24
Finalise 2026 Census topics	Regulations are updated to define Census topics	2024–25
Successful completion of the 2026 Census test in 2025	Census test is completed, and the evaluation report is agreed and accepted by the 2026 Census governance forum	2025–26
Response rate to the 2026 Census	95% response rate	2026–27
Independent survey of user sentiment toward the 2026 Census	80% of the community support the Census	2026–27
Validation of the quality of 2026 Census data by the Independent Assurance Panel	2026 data is of a comparable quality to previous Censuses	2026–27

Priority 2: Generate timely new insights

2.1 **Stakeholder needs are met** - new statistics or insights are used to inform priority policy or decisions

Method	Case Studies ²⁷	Year measured
Case studies showing how new statistics or insights are used by clients	Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure – A National Linkage Spine, Linkage Map, and initial datasets are being implemented to improve understanding of health and employment outcomes for people with a disability. Digital Atlas Project – improving the ability of citizens to access relevant local data for their area.	2023–24

²⁶ Each Census is implemented over a five-year period and as such, targets for this measure change each year to reflect the major phases of Census. Targets relevant to the years covered by this Plan are included here.

²⁷ The ABS uses case studies based on Tier 1 (Significant) Projects and seeks to prioritise case study selection of those projects with a high likelihood of completion in the reporting period. Case study topics listed for this measure are reported against for only the first year covered by this Plan i.e. 2023–24. Each year, new case studies are selected for reporting against this measure.

Priority 3: Exercise leadership in the data landscape

3.1 Access to ABS data and statistics - access to data products and services

Method	Targets ²⁸	Years measured
Composite index of channel access: ²⁹ • Calls to API service • Number of DataLab sessions • Invoices for customised data services • Count of ABS website sessions • Registered users of TableBuilder	108	2023–24
	111	2024–25
	114	2025–26
	117	2026–27

3.2 Delivery of data peer learning opportunities to APS employees³⁰

Method	Targets ³¹	Years measured
Number of peer learning offerings delivered through, for example, specialist speaker series, Data Profession Technical Fora, and other data profession engagements.	5 percent increase on benchmark	2023–24
	7.5 percent increase on benchmark	2024–25
	10 percent increase on benchmark	2025–26
	12.5 percent increase on benchmark	2026–27

²⁸ Based on a benchmark value of 100 in 2020–21.

²⁹ For each of the five channels, the count for the current year is divided by the count in the benchmark year (2020–21). The composite index is calculated by taking the average of each of the five channels and multiplying by 100.

³⁰ Based on a benchmark value of 13,839 in 2022–23.

³¹ The targets for outyears have been revised from a one-off 5% increase on the benchmark in 2023–24, to an increase of 2.5% on the benchmark each year from 2023–24, to reflect strategies to grow the Data Profession.

Priority 4: Reduce burden on data providers

4.1 Efficiency of statistical operations - improve efficiency with which data is collected

Method	Targets ³²	Years measured
Case studies showing efficiencies made in collecting data for statistical purposes	1. Modernisation of Agricultural Statistics – ceasing large agricultural surveys and developing processes to produce future agricultural statistics using these new data sources together with smaller surveys to fill data gaps is expected to reduce burden on farmers and agricultural businesses by 97.5%. 2. Quarterly Business Indicator Survey – introduction of methodological changes to enable a reduction in sample size of 20% by leveraging administrative data.	2023–24

4.2 Burden on survey respondents - time taken to complete business surveys³³

Method	Targets ³⁴	Years measured
Total time taken for survey respondents to complete business surveys	13 percentage point decrease on benchmark	2023–24
	17 percentage point decrease on benchmark	2024–25
	21 percentage point decrease on benchmark	2025–26
	25 percentage point decrease on benchmark	2026–27

³² The ABS uses case studies based on Tier 1 (Significant) Projects and seeks to prioritise case study selection of those projects with a high likelihood of completion in the reporting period. Case study topics listed for this measure are reported against for only the first year covered by this Plan i.e. 2023–24. Each year, new case studies are selected for reporting against this measure.

³³ Based on a benchmark value of 338,964 hours in 2020–21.

³⁴ Targets have been revised to reflect refined estimates of when benefits will be realised from key projects. The targets for 'percentage point decrease on benchmark' in the ABS Corporate Plan 2022-23 were: 2023-24 = 13, 2024-25 = 20; and 2025-26 = 25.

